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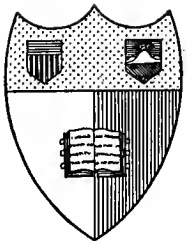

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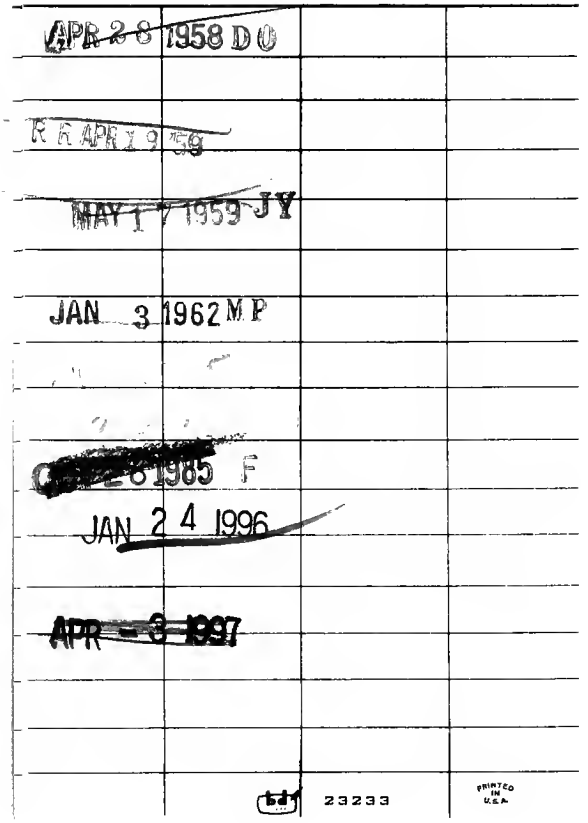

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Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, about 1815

The Battle of Lake Erie

A Collection of Documents, chiefly by Commodore PERRY: including the Court-martial of Commander BARCLAY & the Court of Enquiry on Captain ELLIOTT: edited, with Introduction, Annotations, Bibliography, & Analytical Index, by

CHARLES OSCAR PAULLIN

With portraits, facsimiles, and map

Cleveland: The ROWFANT Club
October, 1918

A451584

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PREFACE

PREFACE

The documents selected for publication in this volume are chiefly of an official character, and are those of greatest interest and probative value. There are other documents, to be sure, which the future historian of the battle will wish to read, such as the affidavits of Perry's officers and Perry's charges against Captain Elliott, but these are unofficial and are biased. Moreover, to have included them would have swelled the book beyond its prescribed limits. About one half of the documents here presented have not been previously published, and many of those that have been published are now issued in a more complete and precise form.

The editor wishes to thank the officials of the United States Navy Department and the Library of Congress in Washington and of the Public Record Office in London for the facilities afforded him in collecting materials for this volume. He is under special obligations to Mr. Charles West Stewart, superintendent of the Library and Naval War Records Office, to Captain Richard Thomas Mulligan, U.S.N., assistant to the Bureau of Navigation, and to Mr. Goodloe Earle Yancey, chief

clerk of that bureau; all of the United States Navy Department, Washington, D.C.

CHARLES OSCAR PAULLIN

Washington, D.C., March 25, 1918

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The primary theater of war in our second conflict with Great Britain, 1812-1815, was the St. Lawrence water-system and the adjacent territory on each side of it. One of the two secondary theaters of war was the maritime frontier and Atlantic seaboard, stretching from Maine to Louisiana (with the exception of Florida); and the other, the deep sea, including the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. The Battle of Lake Erie was fought in the western part of the primary theater of war, on September 10, 1813, midway in time between the commencement of the conflict in June, 1812, and its close in February, 1815.

This battle was the turning point of the war in the west. Previous to it, the American offensive campaign in that quarter had been uniformly unsuccessful. In the summer of 1812, General Isaac Hull, who had advanced into Canada and had besieged Malden, abandoned the siege, retreated to Detroit, and there surrendered that post and his army to the British. About the same time Fort Michilimackinac, near the junction of Lake Huron with Lake Michigan, fell into the hands of the enemy; and Fort Dearborn, on the present site of Chicago, was abandoned. The American military

boundary in the Northwest was pushed southward to the line of the Wabash and Maumee Rivers. Lake Erie was held by the enemy by reason of his naval superiority on that water.

Having obtained possession of a considerable part of the American Northwest, the British carried the war south and southwest of Lake Erie. In September, 1812, they sent an expedition against Fort Wayne, Indiana. In May, 1813, they besieged Fort Meigs on the Maumee River, and in August they attacked Fort Stephenson on the Sandusky River. Each of these movements failed.

Early in 1813, with a view to recovering the ground lost in the previous year, General William Henry Harrison, who had succeeded Hull as commander of the American army in the west, assumed the offensive. In January a division of his army reached the Raisin River in southern Michigan, and was there defeated and captured by the British. Harrison was compelled to abandon his plan of advancing into the enemy's territory by land, and to apply himself to the defense of his military frontier on the Maumee and Sandusky Rivers. Having successfully defended Forts Meigs and Stephenson, he made preparations to advance into Canada by way of Lake Erie. In the summer of 1813, he collected an army along the line of the Sandusky River and established his headquarters at Senecatown or Fort Seneca, ten miles up the Sandusky from Fort Stephenson, which was situated about ten miles from the mouth of the river

at Sandusky Bay. Some forty miles across the lake, on the Canada side of the Detroit River, near its mouth, was Amherstburg, where the British had a naval depot, and Fort Malden, which was occupied by British troops. These were Harrison's objectives. His passage across the lake, however, was blocked by the British fleet, which was in possession of that water. The outcome of his second plan for offensive operations for 1813 depended upon a trial at arms between the British and American naval forces on the lake. By August his preparations were nearing completion, and he anxiously awaited the coming of the American squadron, with whose commander he had been in correspondence for several months.

When the war began, the Americans had no naval force on Lake Erie. As the enemy soon assembled a small fleet there, he held undisputed sway over that great natural highway which formed a most important part of his line of communication between Lower and Upper Canada, and along which he transported troops and military supplies. On his possession of Lake Erie depended his ability to hold Upper Canada (west of the Niagara River), Michigan, and the Northwest. Early in the war the Americans had recognized the need of a naval force on Lake Erie, and on September 7, 1812, Commodore Isaac Chauncey, the commander-in-chief of the naval forces on the lakes, with headquarters at Sacketts Harbor, New York, sent Master-commandant Jesse Duncan

Elliott to Buffalo to select a site for building vessels. Here in the fall of that year a small fleet was assembled. On February 17 of the following year, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry,[1] who had been stationed at Newport, Rhode Island, in command of a flotilla, was assigned to the command of the fleet intended for service on Lake Erie. On March 27, he arrived at Erie, Pennsylvania, not far from the eastern end of the lake, where he found under construction the two sister-ships Lawrence and Niagara. They were brig-rigged, and of four hundred eighty tons burden. In June he removed to Erie the five vessels that had been collected at Buffalo. To these he added three other small craft, making a fleet of ten vessels, all but one of which participated in the battle of September 10. Small as these vessels were, it was necessary to remove the guns from the larger ones before they would pass over Erie Bar, which lay outside Erie Harbor. The existence of this bar made it possible for the British fleet, which was blockading Erie, to pen up Perry's forces and render them use-

[1] Perry was born in South Kingston, Rhode Island, on August 23 [this date is also given August 20 and August 21], 1785. During the Revolutionary War his father, Captain Christopher Raymond Perry, served both on land and at sea, and from 1798 to 1801 in the navy of the United States. The son entered the navy as a midshipman on April 7, 1798, and became a lieutenant on January 15, 1807, and a master-commandant on August 28, 1812. He served in the naval war with France and in the Tripolitan War, and after the latter struggle he commanded several vessels detailed for duty on the Atlantic coast. Early in the War of 1812 he was placed in command of the Newport flotilla. When appointed commander of the squadron on Lake Erie, he was twenty-seven and a half years of age.

less. Fortunately, at an opportune moment, the British commander relaxed the blockade, and Perry was able to reach the open lake. At nine o'clock in the evening of August 4, the day on which he succeeded in this undertaking, Perry wrote to the secretary of the navy, dating his letter from his flag-ship, Lawrence, at anchor outside of Erie Bar:

> I have great pleasure in informing you that I have succeeded after almost incredible labour and fatigue to the men, in getting all the vessels I have been able to man over the bar, viz. Lawrence, Niagara, Caledonia, Ariel, Scorpion, Somers, Tigress, and Porcupine. They are neither well officered or manned, but as the exigency of Genrl. Harrison and the whole of the Western Country is such, I have determined to proceed on service. My government, should I be unsuccessfull, I trust will justly appreciate the motives which have governed me in this determination.[2]

Shortly after reaching the open lake, Perry visited Long Point, the enemy's naval station opposite Erie. Of this visit he wrote thus to the secretary on August 8:

> I have the honor to inform you I have returned from Long Point without having seen the enemy; we are now busily employed in getting in ballast, provisions, and procuring volunteers from the militia. I propose sailing this evening in pursuit of the enemy.
>
> Genl. Harrison writes me – the enemy launched their new ship on the 17th ult. If she is equipped, they will be considerably superior in guns to us. It is much to be re-

[2] *Masters' Commandant Letters*, United States Navy Department Archives, 1813, no. 93.

gretted that our force could not have been got out before; nothing but the hope of meeting their fleet before the new ship[3] is ready could induce me to sail at this time, officered and manned as this squadron is.[4]

A few days later Perry was joined by Master-commandant Jesse Duncan Elliott, with one hundred officers and men, and on August 12 he proceeded westward, writing as follows to the secretary nine days thereafter, from off Sandusky Bay:

I have the honor to inform you I sailed from Erie on the 12th inst., and arrived off this place on the 16th, and immediately took steps for communicating with General Harrison; on the 19th I had the pleasure of receiving him on board. He is not yet ready to advance. I shall therefore sail for Malden immediately and offer the enemy battle. I chaced on the 17th with the squadron one of the small vessels of war of the enemy. She escaped by night coming on and running among the small islands, when we were nearly up with her.[5]

Perry established his headquarters at Put-in-Bay, an indentation on the northern coast of South Bass Island, which lies some twenty miles northwest of the present city of Sandusky, Ohio. Here he was in excellent position to watch the movements of the British fleet, which had retired to its headquarters at Amherstburg, some thirty miles northwestward of Put-in-Bay. He was also convenient to Harrison, who was at Seneca-town, thirty-five miles to the southward. A notion of his movements during the last days of August and the

[3] The Detroit.

[4] *Masters' Commandant Letters*, 1813, no. 101.

[5] — *Ibid.*, no. 111.

first days of September may be obtained from a letter which he wrote to the secretary of the navy, off Sandusky Bay on September 2:

> I have the honour to inform you that I anchored this afternoon with the squadron at this place for the purpose of communicating with Genl. Harrison.
>
> Since I last did myself the honour of writing you I have been twice off Malden–first on the 24th and 25th of last month and again yesterday. Owing to a severe indisposition which confined me to my berth I was under the necessity of anchoring the squadron off Bass Island, a situation which commanded the principal passage. The moment I was able to be on deck I again sailed for Malden and was yesterday all day off that place, close in. Their new ship is rigged, has top gallant yards athwart, and is anchored at the mouth of the harbour under the guns of a battery, together with other vessels – viz. the Queen Charlotte, Hunter, Lady Prevost, a sloop and schooner. Three other vessels are lying at the navy wharf.
>
> The crews of the different vessels have suffered much from a complaint occasioned, it is supposed, by the water. Many are still sick.[6]

The moment that Perry reached the open lake from Erie, the naval superiority on Lake Erie shifted from the British to the Americans, and the former were compelled to act on the defensive. The British fleet was commanded by Commander Robert Heriot Barclay,[7] whose flag-ship, the De-

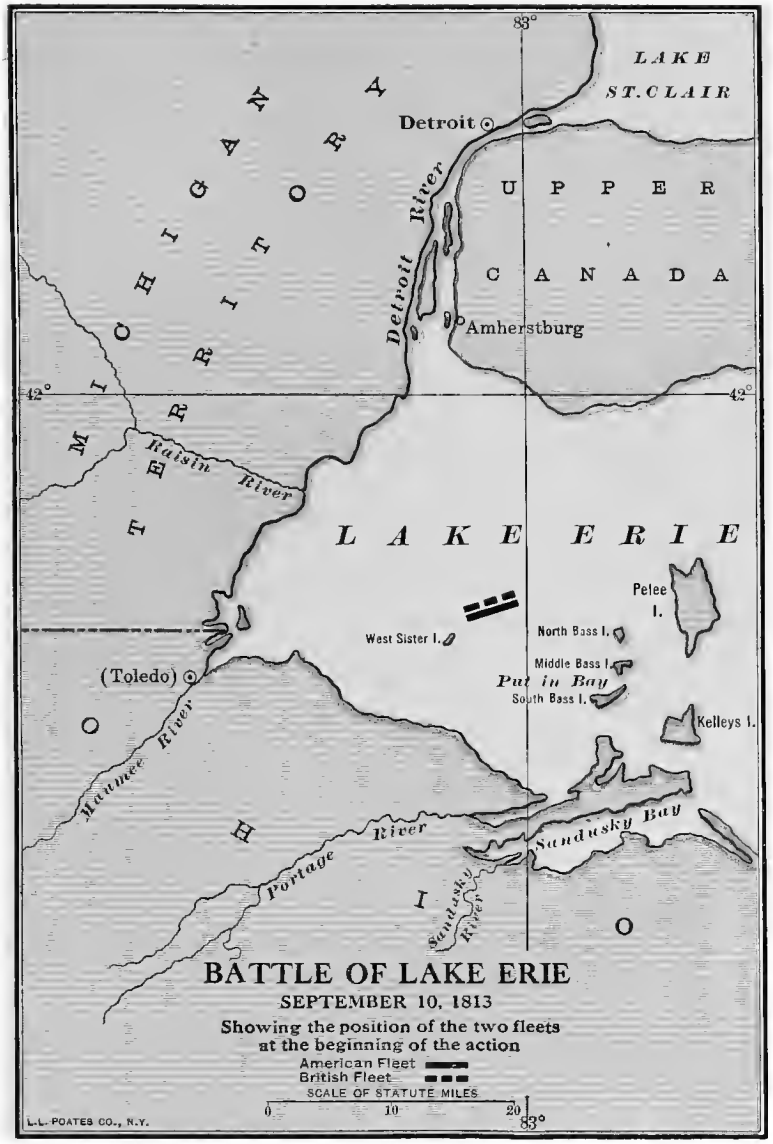
[6] *Masters' Commandant Letters*, 1813, no. 115.

[7] Barclay had fought as a lieutenant at Trafalgar under Nelson, where he lost an arm. "Our father with one arm," Tecumseh called him. He was made a commander in 1813 and a captain in 1824. He died at Edinburgh on May 8, 1837 at the age of fifty-two (L. Homfray Irving's *Officers of the British Forces in Canada*, 228). When the battle of Lake Erie was fought, he was almost precisely the same age as Perry.

troit, was his largest vessel. She was ship-rigged, and of four hundred ninety tons burden. When Perry sailed from Erie, she was at Amherstburg under construction. The addition of this vessel to the British naval forces, and their urgent need of supplies, caused their commander to reach the decision to leave his headquarters and contest with Perry the possession of the lake.

Barclay left Amherstburg on September 9, and at sunrise on the following day his fleet was sighted in the Northwest by the Americans in Put-in-Bay, who at once sailed out to meet their antagonist. The wind, however, was light, and it was almost noon before the two squadrons[8] were in range of each other's guns. At a quarter before twelve Barclay began the action by firing a few long guns, and several minutes later Perry returned the fire. The place of encounter was some ten miles about west-northwest of Put-in-Bay, off West Sister Island. The battle lasted a little more than three hours, that is until about three o'clock, when the

[8] The American squadron consisted of the following vessels: brigs – Lawrence (flag-ship), 20 guns, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry; Niagara, 20, Master-commandant Jesse Duncan Elliott; Caledonia, 3, Lieutenant Daniel Turner; schooners – Ariel, 4, Lieutenant John Packet; Scorpion, 2, Sailing-master Stephen Champlin; Somers, 2, Sailing-master Thomas C. Almy; Trippe, 1, Lieutenant Thomas Holdup Stevens; Tigress, 1, Lieutenant A. H. M. Conckling; and Porcupine, 1, Sailing-master George Senat. The British squadron consisted of the following vessels: ships – Detroit (flag-ship), 19 guns, Commander Robert Heriot Barclay; Queen Charlotte, 17, Commander Robert A. Finnis; schooners – Lady Prevost, 13, Lieutenant Edward W. Buchan; Chippewa (or Chippeway), 1, Master's Mate J. Campbell; brig Hunter, 10, Lieutenant George Bignell; and sloop Little Belt, 3, Lieutenant Robert Irvine.


83°
LAKE
ST. CLAIR
Detroit
MICHIGAN
TERRITORY
Detroit River
UPPER
CANADA
Amherstburg
42°
42°
Raisin River
LAKE ERIE
Pelee
I.
West Sister I.
North Bass I.
Middle Bass I.
Put in Bay
South Bass I.
Kelleys I.
(Toledo)
OHIO
Maumee River
Portage River
Sandusky Bay
Sandusky River
BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE
SEPTEMBER 10, 1813
Showing the position of the two fleets
at the beginning of the action
American Fleet
British Fleet
SCALE OF STATUTE MILES
0
10
20
83°
L.L. POATES CO., N.Y.

British surrendered. A dramatic event, which divides the battle into two well-defined parts, was Perry's transferring of his flag from the Lawrence to the Niagara, about half past two in the afternoon. Up to this time the Niagara had rendered her consorts comparatively little assistance. The reasons why she was not brought into closer action have long been a subject of controversy.[9] For the details of the battle, the account of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, an authority on the naval history of the War of 1812, may be quoted:

> Perry had nine vessels, the brigs Lawrence, Niagara, and Caledonia, the schooners Ariel, Scorpion, Somers, Porcupine, and Tigress, and the sloop Trippe. Their total tonnage was 1671, and their total crews amounted to 532 men; but sickness had been so prevalent that only about 416 were fit for duty. In his vessels fifty-four guns were mounted, fourteen of which were on pivots. In the action his broadside weight of metal was 896 pounds; 288 of which were thrown from long guns. The Lawrence and Niagara were large men-of-war brigs, armed in the usual manner with eighteen 32-pr. carronades, and two long 12's apiece. The smaller vessels, in addition to two or three light carronades, carried long 32's, 24's, and 12's. Barclay's squadron consisted of six vessels, the ships Detroit and Queen Charlotte, the brig Hunter, the

[9] For an account of this controversy see T. R. Lounsbury's *James Fenimore Cooper* (American Men of Letters series), 208-230; Justin Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*, vol. vii, 432-433; and Nina Moore and Francis Tiffany's *Harm Jan Huidekoper*, 188-189. See also the "Bibliography" at the end of this volume. Rear-admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan (*Sea Power in its Relation to the War of 1812*, vol. ii, 76-99) replies to the arguments of Cooper, who was Elliott's ablest defender. Mahan gives a verdict in favor of Perry, which agrees, it would seem, with the expert naval opinion of the present time.

schooners Lady Prevost, and Chippeway, and the sloop Little Belt. The aggregate tonnage was 1460; the aggregate of the crews summed up to about 440 men. The total number of guns was sixty-three, five being on pivots. The total broadside weight was 459 pounds, of which 195 were from long guns; for many of Barclay's guns were of very small calibre, including long 2's, 4's, and 6's, and 12-pr. carronades.

The difference in number of men between the two squadrons was not very material. Both had scratch crews, made up of regular seamen, of lake seamen, of British regulars, and a few Indians in Barclay's squadron, and American militia and a few negroes in Perry's. In tonnage Perry was superior by just about what would be indicated by the possession of three extra schooners. The decisive difference was in the armament. In weight of broadside the superiority of the Americans in long-gun metal was nearly as three to two, and in carronade metal it was greater than two to one. The ship Detroit mounted chiefly long guns, and was on the whole probably rather superior to either of Perry's big brigs. The Queen Charlotte was greatly inferior to either. The small vessels lacked the long guns which made the small American vessels formidable. In smooth water and at a distance the long guns of Perry's smaller vessels gave his squadron a very marked advantage; in a brisk breeze his two big brigs should have been almost a match for the entire British squadron.

When, at daylight on September 10th, Perry discovered Barclay's squadron he was at anchor at Put-In-Bay. As soon as the ships were made out, Perry got under way and bore down toward them, having the weather gage. Barclay lay to in close column, the Chippeway ahead, followed by the Detroit, the Hunter, the Queen Charlotte, the Lady Prevost, and the Little Belt. Perry went down with the wind off his port beam, and made the attack in column ahead obliquely. The Ariel and Scorpion led the

line a little ahead, and on the weather bow, of Perry's ship the Lawrence. Next came the Caledonia, and after her the Lawrence's twin sister, the Niagara, under Captain Jesse D. Elliott, whom Perry had superseded, and who showed by his actions that he felt no particular zeal in helping Perry to gain glory. The Niagara was followed by the Somers, the Porcupine, the Tigress, and the Trippe in that order.

The winds were light and baffling, and, as the American ships came down, they formed a straggling and irregular line which approached at an angle of about fifteen degrees to the line of Barclay's squadron, which was in much better and more compact order. At a quarter to twelve the Detroit opened the action with her long 24's. Her first shot fell short; her second crashed through the Lawrence; whereupon the Scorpion replied with her long 32. Ten minutes after the Detroit had first fired, the Lawrence, which had shifted her port bow-chaser into the place of one of the carronades on her starboard side, opened with both her long 12's. At noon she tried her carronades, but the shot fell short. Shortly afterwards the action became general on both sides, though the rearmost American vessels were still so far away that they were themselves not exposed to danger at all, and only the longest guns occasionally reached. The Lawrence was steadily nearing Barclay's line, Perry making every effort to close; but it was half an hour after the Detroit had opened before the Lawrence got to the close quarters necessary for the effective use of her carronades. Throughout this half hour Barclay's leading ships had concentrated their fire on Perry's vessel, and so the Lawrence had suffered a good deal; though the schooners Scorpion and Ariel had been pounding away with their long guns to help her.

For some time, therefore, the action at the head of the line was in favour of the British. The sides of the Detroit were dotted with marks of shot that did not penetrate,

partly because of the long range, partly because the Americans in this action seemed to show a tendency to overload their carronades. There was a carronade in the Scorpion which upset down the hatchway as soon as it got hot; and one of the long guns of the Ariel burst. On the other side, the Detroit had her own difficulties. There were no locks for her guns, thanks to the hurry with which she had been prepared, and they had to be discharged by flashing pistols at the touch-holes. Nevertheless, Barclay fought her to perfection, and the trained artillerists among his seamen and soldiers aimed the guns so well that Perry had his hands full. The Caledonia came down beside the Lawrence, helping to divert the attention of the Hunter and the Queen Charlotte from her.' But Elliott handled the Niagara poorly. He did not follow Perry to close quarters, but engaged the Queen Charlotte at a distance which rendered the carronades of both vessels useless. In fact, the only effective fighting at the rear of the lines was that done by the four American gun-vessels astern of the Niagara. Each of these had a long 32 or 24, of which, on such smooth seas, she could make good use against the Lady Prevost, Queen Charlotte, and Hunter; the latter having an absurd armament of little guns which threw a broadside of thirty pounds all told. Both Commander Finnis, of the Queen Charlotte, and his first lieutenant, Thomas Stokoe, were killed early in the action. Her next in command, the Canadian Lieutenant Irvine, finding that he could make no effective answer to the long guns of the schooners, drew forward and joined in the attack on the Lawrence at close quarters. The Niagara was left practically without any antagonist, and, at the end of the line, the fight became one at long range between the Somers, Tigress, Porcupine, and Trippe on the one side, and the Lady Prevost, and Little Belt on the other. The Lady Prevost's armament consisted chiefly of 12-pr. carronades.

She made a noble fight, but such an armament at long range in smooth water was utterly useless against the heavy guns of the schooners. Her commander, Lieutenant Buchan, and her first lieutenant, Francis Rolette, were both seriously wounded, and she was greatly cut up and began to fall to leeward.

The fight at the head of the line was waged with bloody obstinacy between the Scorpion, Ariel, Lawrence, and Chesapeake [Caledonia?] on the one hand, and the Caledonia [Chippeway?], Detroit, Queen Charlotte, and Chippeway [Hunter?] on the other. Instead of pairing in couples, the ships on each side seemed to choose the largest opponents as special targets. The Americans concentrated their fire on the Queen Charlotte, and Detroit; while the British devoted their attention mainly to the Lawrence, which had already suffered severely while working down to get within range of her carronades. The Queen Charlotte was soon almost disabled. The Detroit was also pounded practically to a standstill, suffering especially from the raking fire of the gunboats. Barclay was fighting her himself with the utmost gallantry; but he was so badly wounded that he was at last obliged to quit the deck. His first lieutenant, John Garland, was also wounded mortally; but Lieutenant George Inglis, to whom the command was turned over; continued the fight as gamely as ever.

Meanwhile the Lawrence was knocked to pieces by the combined fires of her adversaries. Of the one hundred and three men who had been fit for duty when she began the action, eighty-three were killed or wounded. As the vessel was so shallow, the ward-room, which was used as the cockpit into which the wounded were taken, was mainly above water, and the shots came through it continually. Many of the wounded were killed or maimed while under the hands of the surgeons. The first lieutenant, Yarnall, was hit three times, but refused to leave

the deck, and fought the ship to the last. The only other lieutenant on board, Brooks, of the marines, was mortally wounded. Every brace and bowline was shot away, and the hull was so riddled that it looked like a sieve. One by one the guns on the engaged side were dismounted, while the men were shot down until they could not man even the guns that were left. However, the slaughter of four-fifths of his crew before his eyes did not daunt Perry in the least. When there were no men left to serve the last three or four guns, he called down through the skylight for one of the surgeon's assistants. The call was repeated and obeyed, until all those officers had been used up. Then he shouted down, "Can any of the wounded pull a rope?" and three or four of them hobbled up on deck to help him lay the last guns. Finally, Perry himself was left with only the purser and chaplain, and by their aid he fired a final shot, and immediately afterwards, the gun which he had used, the only one left, was disabled.

Meanwhile Mr. Turner in the Caledonia, having put his helm up, had passed the Lawrence and run into the British line, where he engaged at half pistol-shot distance, though his little brig was absolutely without quarters.

Perry's vessel lay an unmanageable hulk on the water, while the shot ripped through her sides, and there was not a gun that could be fired in return; but Perry had not the slightest intention of giving up the fight. He had gone into the battle flying on his flag Lawrence's dying words, "Don't give up the ship"; and he intended to live up to the text. The Niagara was at that time a quarter of a mile to windward of the Lawrence on her port-beam. She was steering for the head of Barclay's line, and was almost uninjured, having taken very little part in the combat, and never having been within a distance that rendered her carronades of any use. Perry instantly decided to shift his broad pennant to her. Leaping into a boat with his

brother and four seamen, he rowed to the fresh brig, having literally been hammered out of the Lawrence by the pounding which he had received for two hours and a half. As soon as he reached the Niagara, he sent Elliott astern to hurry up the three rearmost schooners; for the sloop Trippe, on her own account, had steered straight for the British line, and was very near the Caledonia. The Lawrence, having but fourteen sound men left, struck her colours; but the action began again before possession could be taken of her, and she drifted astern out of the fight. At a quarter to three the schooners had closed, and Perry bore up to break Barclay's line, the powerful brig to which he had shifted his broad pennant being practically unharmed, as indeed were his rearmost gun-vessels.

The British ships had fought until they could fight no longer. The two smallest, the Chippeway and Little Belt, were not much damaged; but the other four were too disabled either to fight or manœuvre effectively so as to oppose fresh antagonists. However they answered as best they could, with great guns and musketry, as the Niagara stood down and broke the British line, firing her port battery into the Chippeway, Little Belt, and Lady Prevost, and her starboard battery into the Detroit, Queen Charlotte, and Hunter, raking on both sides. The Detroit and Charlotte had been so cut up aloft, almost every brace and stay being shot away, that they could not tack, and tried to wear; but they fell foul of one another, and the Niagara luffed athwart their bows, firing uninterruptedly, while, under their sterns, the Caledonia and the schooners stationed themselves so close that some of their grape-shot, passing over the British vessels, rattled through Perry's spars. The Lady Prevost had sagged to leeward, an unmanageable wreck. Barclay had done everything in the power of man to do. The first and second in command of every one of his six vessels had been either killed or wounded; and at three o'clock his flag was struck.

The Chippeway and Little Belt tried to escape, but were overtaken and brought to by the Trippe and the Scorpion, the commander of the latter, Mr. Stephen Champlin, firing the last shot of the battle, as he had likewise fired the first on the American side.

None of the American ships had suffered severely, excepting the Lawrence, to whose share over two-thirds of the total loss had fallen. In breaking the line, however, the Niagara had suffered somewhat; and the Caledonia, Ariel, Scorpion, and Trippe had come in for some of the pounding. All told, twenty-seven men had been killed and ninety-six wounded, three mortally. The British loss amounted to forty-one killed and ninety-four wounded, chiefly in the Detroit and Queen Charlotte.[10]

The effects of this decisive victory were many and far-reaching. The Americans were left in complete control of Lake Erie, which they maintained until the end of the war. Harrison was able at once to take the offensive. Before the end of September Perry had transported the American army across the lake, and the British had evacuated Malden, Amherstburg, and Detroit, had abandoned Michigan and the Northwest (with the exception of Michilimackinac), and were fleeing eastward through Upper Canada. Harrison pursued the enemy, overtook him, and on October 5 defeated him and captured his army in the Battle of the Thames.[11] All the western part of Upper Canada fell into the hands of the Americans. The

[10] From Col. Theodore Roosevelt's chapter "The War with the United States, 1812-15," in William Laird Clowes's *The Royal Navy*, vol. vi, 120-126.

[11] Perry took part in the battle as an aide-de-camp of Harrison.

results of Perry's victory were not alone of a military character. They were felt at Ghent in 1814 when the treaty of peace was being negotiated. They greatly strengthened the American negotiators and correspondingly weakened the British, who attempted but failed to limit the sovereignty of the United States over a part of the Northwest.

Perry[12] remained in command of the squadron until October 25, when he was succeeded by Elliott. On his return home he was everywhere received with great honor. Already the president had promoted him to a captaincy,[13] the highest rank in the navy known to the law.[14] Several cities voted him swords, Boston gave him a service of plate, and

[12] Perry lived less than six years after his great victory. On July 17, 1814, he was ordered to proceed from Newport to Baltimore and take charge of the frigate Java, then under construction at the latter city. Six weeks later he was employed in harassing a British squadron, which was retreating down the Potomac, by means of some batteries which he erected at Indian Head, Maryland. In 1816-1817, he was in command of the frigate Java, in the Mediterranean, where we were having trouble with the Algerines. It was during this tour of duty that differences arose between him and his captain of marines that culminated in a duel. In 1818, his controversy with Captain Elliott threatened to lead to a duel with that officer. In the summer of 1819, Perry was sent on an important mission to South America, with several war-ships. Soon after reaching his destination, he fell ill with the yellow fever, and on August 23 he died at Port of Spain, Island of Trinidad. The governor of the island, Sir Ralph Woodford, showed him every possible honor and accorded him a military funeral (*Niles' Register*, vol. xvii, 71-72). In 1826 his body was brought to his native land by the United States sloop-of-war Lexington, and was re-interred with much ceremony at Newport, Rhode Island.

[13] See Document 16.

[14] The rank of commodore was not specifically created by statute until 1862.

Newport presented him with a similar token of regard.[15] He was dined and toasted at Baltimore, Washington, and Boston, and the legislatures of Pennsylvania and Georgia thanked him for his great victory. On April 18, 1814, Congress authorized the president to purchase the vessels captured by Perry for two hundred fifty-five thousand dollars, and divide that sum among the captors as prize money; and it gave Perry an additional sum of five thousand dollars.[16] On January 6, it passed the following resolution:

> That the thanks of Congress be, and the same are hereby presented to Captain Oliver Hazard Perry, and through him to the officers, seamen, marines, and infantry serving as such, attached to the squadron under his command, for the decisive and glorious victory gained on Lake Erie, on the tenth of September, in the year one thousand, eight hundred and thirteen, over a British squadron of superior force.

[15] The inhabitants of Quebec presented Barclay with a superb piece of plate, on which the following inscription was engraved: "Presented to Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, of his Majesty's royal navy, by the inhabitants of Quebec, in testimony of the sense they justly entertain of the exalted courage and heroic valour displayed by him, and by the officers, seamen, soldiers, and marines of the flotilla under his command, in an action with a greatly superior fleet of the enemy upon Lake Erie, on the 10th day of September, 1813; when the presence of a few additional seamen was only wanting to have effected the total discomfiture of the hostile squadron. Of Captain Barclay it may most truly be said, that although he could not command victory, he did more – he nobly deserved it." Barclay received also a piece of plate from the Canada merchants residing in London (*Naval Chronicle*, vol. xxxv, 378-379). At a public dinner in his honor, given at Terrebonne, Canada, in 1814, Barclay gave the following volunteer toast: "Commodore Perry, the gallant and generous enemy" (*Niles' Register*, vol. vi, 175).

[16] United States *Statutes at Large*, vol. iii, 130.

That the President of the United States be requested to cause gold medals to be struck, emblematical of the action between the two squadrons, and to present them to Captain Perry and Captain Jesse D. Elliott, in such manner as will be most honorable to them; and that the President be further requested to present a silver medal with suitable emblems and devices to each of the commissioned officers, either of the navy or army, serving on board, and a sword to each of the midshipmen and sailing-masters who so nobly distinguished themselves on that memorable day.[17]

[17] United States *Statutes at Large*, vol. iii, 141.

DOCUMENTS

I

Dispatch of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Major-general William Henry Harrison

From a copy (probably of the original) formerly in the possession of Mr. William Keeney Bixby, of St. Louis, Missouri. It is not known whether the original dispatch is still in existence. Mr. Benson John Lossing in his *Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*, page 530, publishes a "Facsimile of Perry's Dispatch," without the date and address. Lossing says that Perry's two dispatches of September 10 were carried to their destination by Lieutenant Dulaney Forrest, who took with him to Washington the captured British flags. Forrest carried the flags but not the dispatches. See Document 10.

1. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

U.S. BRIG NIAGARA, off the Western Sisters,[18] Head of Lake Erie Sept. 10, 1813–4 p.m.

DEAR GENL: We have met the enemy, and they are ours–two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop.[19]

Yours with great respect and esteem

O. H. PERRY

[18] An island near the western end of Lake Erie, about thirty miles northwest of Sandusky, Ohio, and ten miles southwest of Middle Sister and East Sister Islands.

[19] The captured fleet consisted of two ships, two schooners, one brig and one sloop. Perry gives the list correctly in his official letter (see Document 7).

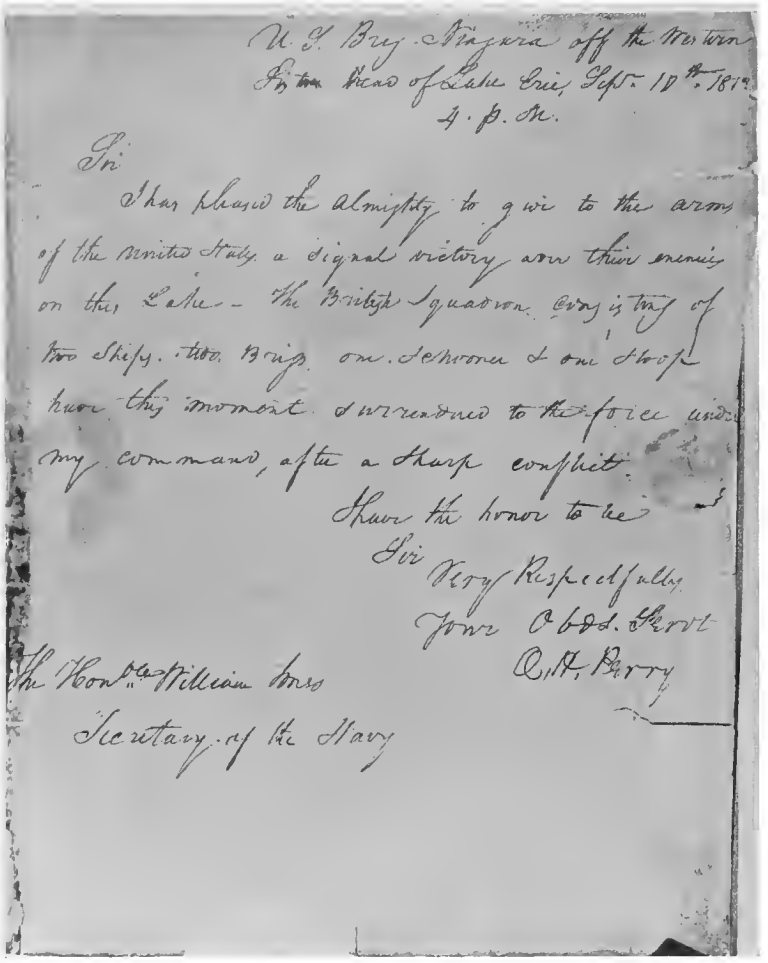
II

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Secretary of the Navy William Jones

From the original in the United States Navy Department Archives, Washington, *Captains' Letters*, 1813, vol. vi, no. 33. This has been published many times. It appeared in *Niles' Register* (Baltimore), vol. v, 60, and in the *National Intelligencer* (Washington), September 22, 1813. Lossing's statement (*Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*, 531) that it was carried to Washington, together with the captured flags, by Lieutenant Dulaney Forrest, is erroneous. The dispatch reached Washington on September 21 (see Document 13), and Forrest with the flags on October 10 (see Document 10 and the *National Intelligencer,* October 15, 1813).

[Identically the same letter, even to the hour, 4 p. m., was written by Commodore Perry to Commodore Isaac Chauncey, commanding United States Naval forces on the lakes, the original of which is preserved in the archives of the New York Historical Society, having been presented to it May 2, 1854, by the reverend Peter S. Chauncey, son of Commodore Chauncey.]

William Jones was secretary of the navy from January 12, 1813, to December 1, 1814. After serving in the Revolutionary marine, he entered the merchant service. In 1801-1803 he was a member of Congress, from Pennsylvania. After his term as secretary of the navy he was president of the United States Bank and collector of the port of Philadelphia.


U. S. Brig Niagara off the Western
Extremity of Lake Erie, Sept. 10th. 1813
4. P. M.

Sir

I have pleased the Almighty to give to the arms
of the United States a signal victory over their enemies
on this Lake — The British Squadron, consisting of
two Ships, two Brigs, one Schooner & one Sloop
have this moment surrendered to the force under
my command, after a sharp conflict.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Very Respectfully
Your Obdt. Servt
O. H. Perry

The Honble. William Jones
Secretary of the Navy

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE DISPATCH OF COMMODORE PERRY TO SECRETARY JONES, SEPTEMBER 10, 1813

From the original manuscript in the United States Navy Department Archives, Washington, D.C.

2. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES

U.S. BRIG NIAGARA off the Western Sister, Head of Lake Erie Sepr 10, 1813–4 p.m.

SIR: I[t] has pleased the Almighty to give to the arms of the United States a signal victory over their enemies on this lake–the British Squadron consisting of two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop have this moment surrendered to the force under my command, after a sharp conflict.

I have the honor to be, Sir

very respectfully your obdt. servt.

O. H. PERRY

III

Letter of Lieutenant George Inglis to Commander Robert Heriot Barclay

From the original in the Public Record Office, London. This document is printed in *Niles' Register* (Baltimore), volume vi, 182, and in the *Naval Chronicle* (London), volume xxxi, 252.

3. LIEUTENANT GEORGE INGLIS[20] TO COMMANDER ROBERT HERIOT BARCLAY

HIS MAJESTY'S LATE SHIP DETROIT
10th Septr., 1813

SIR, I have the honor to transmit to you an account of the termination of the late unfortunate action with the enemy's squadron.

On coming on the quarter-deck, after your being wounded, the enemy's second brig,[21] at that time on our weather beam, shortly afterwards took a position on our weather bow, to rake us, to prevent which in attempting to wear to get our starboard broadside to bear upon her, a number of the guns of the larboard broadside being at this time disabled, fell on board the Queen Charlotte, at this time running up to leeward of us, in this situation the two ships remained for some time, as soon as we got clear of her, I ordered the Queen Charlotte to shoot ahead of us if possible, and attempted to back our fore topsail to get astern, but the ship laying completely unmanageable, every brace cut

[20] Inglis was second in rank on board the Detroit. When Barclay, on being wounded, went below, about 2:30 p.m., Inglis succeeded to the command. He gives an account of the battle from this time until its close.

[21] The Niagara.

away, the mizen topmast and gaff down, all the other masts badly wounded, not a stay left forward, hull shattered very much, a number of the guns disabled, and the enemy's squadron raking both ships, ahead and astern, none of our own in a situation to support us, I was under the painful necessity of answering the enemy to say we had struck, the Queen Charlotte having previously done so.

I have the honor to be, etc. GEORGE INGLIS.

IV
Extract from the Diary of Dr. Usher Parsons

This document is reprinted from the Rhode Island Historical Society Publications, new series, volume vii, 245-246. It is printed in part in Tristam Burges's *Battle of Lake Erie*, 84-85. Its phraseology is that of a ship's log and of a seaman and not that of a diary and of a surgeon. Burges says that it is an extract from the log of the Lawrence, that the entry in the log was made by Sailing-master W. V. Taylor within twenty-four hours after the action, and that the entry was copied in the diary on the day after the battle. None of the logs of Perry's ships are in the Navy Department at Washington. Lossing in compiling his account of the battle used the log of the Lawrence (*Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*, 533).

4. EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF DR. USHER PARSONS

Friday, September 10th, Put-in Bay

At 5 o'clock a.m. discovered the enemy's squadron bearing N.W. Wind S.W. At 7 could see all of the vessels viz. 2 ships, 2 brigs, 1 schooner, and 1 sloop. At 10 called all hands to quarters. At ¼ before Meridn. the enemy commenced the action at 1 mile distance. In ½ an hour we came within musket shot of the enemy's new ship Detroit. At this time they opened a most destructive fire on the Lawrence from their whole squadron. At ½ past one so entirely disabled we could work the brig no longer. At 2 p.m. most of the guns were dismounted breachings gone or carriages knocked to pieces. At ½ past 2 when not another gun could be worked or fired from the Lawrence, Capt. Perry hauled down the fighting flag[22] which bore this motto *Dont give up the ship* and repaired on board the Niagara, and there raised it again. In ten minutes after we struck to the enemy. Cap't Perry made all sail with the Niagara which hitherto had

[22] This flag was made at Erie, Pennsylvania (Lossing, *Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*, 533). It is now at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.

kept out of the action and in 15 minutes passed in among the B. squadron, having the Detroit, Queen Charlotte and Lady Prevot on the starboard side and the Hunter on the larboard side and silenced them all and 10 minutes before 3 they hauled down their colours. Two small vessels attempted to escape but being overhauled struck a few minutes after three. Killed on board the Lawrence, Lieut. John Brook,[23] Midn. Henry Laub, James W. Allen, Jos. Kennedy, John C. Kelly, John Smith, Wm. Cranson, Andrew Michael, John Hoffman, Charles Pohig, Nelson Peters, James Jones, John Rose, James Carty, Thos. Butler, Wilson Mays, Christian Mayo, Charles Johnes, Eatheldras Sykes, and three others.

[23] Lieutenant John Brooks of the marine corps. He was a son of General John Brooks, governor of Massachusetts from 1816 to 1823. A cannon-ball severed his leg from the body at the hip, and he died two hours later. A letter of Perry, dated September 12, 1813, to the father announcing the death of the son will be found in the New England *Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. xix, 194.

V

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Major-general William Henry Harrison

From a copy (probably of the original) formerly in the possession of Mr. William Keeney Bixby, of St. Louis. It has been published in part in *Niles' Register*, volume v, 61 (September 25, 1813).

5. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

11. Sept., 1813

DR. SIR: I am this moment informed by Capt Horton[24] that you have commenced your march – I have taken the liberty of requesting your officer, who was bound to Fort Meigs, to return with my despatches to you, and the government – and have promised to take the responsibility of his deviating from his orders, on myself – I hope my anxiety to communicate to you, intelligence of so much importance will be my excuse – We have a great number of prisoners, which I wish to land – will you be so good, as to order a guard to receive them? and inform me of the place? – Considerable numbers have been killed and wounded on both sides – from the best information, we have more prisoners, than we have men on board our vessels.[25]

In great haste, yours very respectfully

O. H. PERRY

[24] The records of the United States War Department show that Benjamin Horton and Benjamin Horton, Jr., of New York; James Horton, of Maryland; and William Horton, of Georgia, served as captains in the War of 1812.

[25] According to Mr. Neeser's statistics of the battle (*Statistical and*

Many of the prisoners are of opinion, that Genl. Proctor[26] has commenced his retreat march—and that the Indians, after committing great excesses, have withdrawn.

Chronological History of the United States Navy, vol. ii, 50-51), the men on board the prizes numbered 323, and on board the American squadron 485. There is however some variation in the figures given by different authorities. One hundred and twenty-three of Perry's men were unfit for duty (see Document 7).

[26] Major-general Henry Procter, commander of the British army on the Detroit line.

William Henry Harrison, 1815

VI

Letter of Commander Robert Heriot Barclay to Sir James Yeo

From the original in the British Public Record office, London. This letter has been frequently published, in whole or in part (See *Niles' Register*, volume vi, 181-182; the *Naval Chronicle*, volume xxxi, 250-253; and H. B. Dawson's *Battles of the United States*, volume ii, 289-290). Yeo was in command of the British naval forces on the lakes.

6. COMMANDER ROBERT HERIOT BARCLAY TO COMMODORE SIR JAMES YEO

HIS MAJESTY'S LATE SHIP DETROIT, Put-in Bay, Lake Erie 12th September, 1813

SIR: The last letter I had the honor of writing to you, dated the 6th instant, I informed you that unless certain intimation was received of more seamen being on their way to Amhertsburg, I should be obliged to sail with the squadron deplorably manned as it was, to fight the enemy (who blockaded the port) to enable us to get supplies of provisions and stores of every description, so perfectly destitute of provisions was the post that there was not a day's flour in store, and the crews of the squadron under my command were on half allowance of many things, and when that was done there was no more; such were the motives which induced Major-general Proctor (whom, by your instructions I was directed to consult, and whose wishes, I was enjoined to execute as far as relates to the good of the country) to concur in the necessity of a battle being risqued under the many disadvantages which I laboured, and it now remains for me, the most melancholy task to relate to you the unfortunate issue of that battle as well as the many untoward circumstances that led to that event.

No intelligence of seamen having arrived I sailed, on the 9th instant fully expecting to meet the enemy next morning, as they had been seen among the islands—nor was I mistaken, soon after day light they were seen in motion in Put-in-Bay, the wind then at south west, and light, giving us the weather gage; I bore up for them in hopes of bringing them to action among the islands, but that intention was soon frustrated by the wind suddenly shifting to the south east, which brought the enemy directly to windward.

The line was formed according to a given plan, so that each ship might be supported against the superior force of the two brigs opposed to them; about ten the enemy had cleared the islands and immediately bore up, under easy sail, in a line abreast, each brig being also supported by the small vessels; at a quarter before twelve I commenced the action by firing a few long guns, about a quarter past the American commodore, also supported by two schooners, one carrying four long 12 pounders—the other a long thirty-two, and twenty-four pounder, came to close action with the Detroit—the other brig of the enemy apparently destined to engage the Queen Charlotte, supported in like manner by two schooners, kept so far to windward as to render the Queen Charlotte's 24 pounder carronades useless, while she was, with the Lady Prevost, exposed to the heavy and destructive fire of the Caledonia and four other schooners, armed with long and heavy guns, like those I have already described.

Too soon, alas, was I deprived of the services of the noble and intrepid Captain Finnis,[27] who soon after the commencement of the action fell, and with him fell my greatest support. Soon after Lieutenant Stokoe of the Queen Charlotte was struck senseless by a splinter which deprived the country of his services at this very critical period. As I perceived the Detroit had enough to contend with, without the prospect of a fresh brig; Provincial Lieutenant Irvine[28] who then had charge of the Queen Charlotte behaved with great courage, but his experience was much too limited, to supply the place of such an officer as Captain Finnis, hence she proved of far less assistance than I expected.

The action continued with great fury until half past two, when I perceived my opponent drop astern, and a boat passing from him to the Niagara (which vessel was at this time perfectly fresh), the American commodore seeing that as yet the day was against him (his vessel having struck soon after he left her), and also the very defenceless state of the Detroit, which ship was now a perfect wreck principally from the raking fire of the gun boats, and also that the Queen Charlotte was in such a situation that I could receive very little assistance from her, and the Lady Prevost being at this time too far to leeward, from her rudder being injured,

[27] For the full names of the officers killed and wounded, see Barclay's list at the end of this document.

[28] Second Lieutenant Robert Irvine, of the Canadian provincial marine.

No intelligence of seamen having arrived I sailed, on the 9th instant fully expecting to meet the enemy next morning, as they had been seen among the islands – nor was I mistaken, soon after day light they were seen in motion in Put-in-Bay, the wind then at south west, and light, giving us the weather gage; I bore up for them in hopes of bringing them to action among the islands, but that intention was soon frustrated by the wind suddenly shifting to the south east, which brought the enemy directly to windward.

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[27] For the full names of the officers killed and wounded, see Barclay's list at the end of this document.

[28] Second Lieutenant Robert Irvine, of the Canadian provincial marine.

made a noble and, alas too successful an effort to regain it, for he bore up and supported by his small vessels, passed within pistol shot, and took a raking position on our bow, nor could I prevent it, as the unfortunate situation of the Queen Charlotte prevented us from wearing, in attempting it we fell on board her. My gallant first Lieutenant Garland was now mortally wounded, and myself so severely that I was obliged to quit the deck.

Manned as the squadron was with not more than fifty British seamen, the rest a mixed crew of Canadians and soldiers, and who were totally unacquainted with such service rendered the loss of officers more sensibly felt and never in any action was the loss more severe, every officer commanding vessels, and their seconds, was either killed, or wounded so severely as to be unable to keep the deck.

Lieutenant Buchan in the Lady Prevost behaved most nobly, and did everything that a brave and experienced officer could do, in a vessel armed with 12 pounder carronades, against vessels carrying long guns – I regret to state that he was very severely wounded. Lieutenant Bignal (of the Dover),[29] commanding the Hunter displayed the greatest intrepidity, but his guns being small 2, 4, and 6 pounders, he could be of much less service than he wished.

Every officer in the Detroit behaved in the most exemplary manner. Lieutenant Inglis, shewed such calm intrepidity that I was fully convinced

[29] His Majesty's troop-ship Dover. Bignell was detached from her at Quebec.

that on leaving the deck I left the ship in excellent hands, and for an account of the battle after that, I refer you to his letter which he wrote me, for your information.

Mr. Hoffmeister, purser of the Detroit, nobly volunteered his services on deck, and behaved in a manner that reflects the highest honor on him, I regret to add that, he is very severely wounded in the knee.

Provincial Lieutenant Purvis[30] and the Military Officer Lieutenant Garden,[31] of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and O'Keefe[32] of the 41st Regiment, behaved in a manner which excited my warmest admiration: the few British seamen, I had, behaved with their usual intrepidity, and as long as I was on the deck the troops behaved with a calmness and courage, worthy of a more fortunate issue to their exertions.

The weather gage gave the enemy a prodigious advantage as it enabled them, not only to choose their position, but their distance also, which they did in such a manner as to prevent the carronades of the Queen Charlotte, and Lady Prevost, from having much effect, while their long guns did great execution particularly against the Queen Charlotte.

Captain Parry has behaved in a most humane and attentive manner, not only to myself and officers, but to all the wounded.

[30] First Lieutenant Francis Purvis of the Canadian provincial marine.

[31] John Campbell Garden.

[32] Arthur O'Keefe.

I trust that, although unsuccessful, you will approve of the motives that induced me to sail under so many disadvantages, and that it may be hereafter proved, that under such circumstances the honor of His Majesty's flag has not been tarnished.

I enclose the list of killed and wounded. And have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient humble servant

R. H. BARCLAY, *Commander*, late Sen. Officer.

A STATEMENT OF THE FORCE OF HIS MAJESTY'S SQUADRON ON LAKE ERIE AND THAT OF THE UNITED STATES [33]

BRITISH SQUADRON

VESSELS NAMES	No. OF LONG GUNS	CALIBRE	No. OF CARRONADES	CALIBRE	REMARKS
Detroit	2	24			
	1	18	1	24	
	6	12	1	18	
	8	9			
Queen Charlotte	3	12	14	24	
Lady Prevost	3	9	10	12	
Hunter	2	6			
	4	4	2	12	
	2	2			
Little Belt	1	9			
	2	6			
Chippeway	1	9			

UNITED STATES SQUADRON

VESSELS NAMES	No. OF LONG GUNS	CALIBRE	No. OF CARRONADES	CALIBRE	REMARKS
Lawrence	2	12	18	32	
Niagara	2	12	18	32	
Caledonia	2	24	1	32	all on Pivot
Ariel	4	12			
Summers	1	24	1	32	
Porcupine	1	32			
Tigress	1	32			
Scorpion	1	32			
	1	24			
Trip	1	24			

R. H. BARCLAY, *Commander.*

[33] These lists agree with Perry's as respects the number of guns. They give the calibre of the guns, a detail omitted by Perry (see Document 7).

A LIST OF THE KILLED AND WOUNDED IN HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS AND VESSELS IN AN ACTION WITH THE AMERICAN SQUADRON ON LAKE ERIE, 10 SEPTR. 1813

	Killed	Wounded
Officers	3	9
Men	38	85
Total	41	94

Names of Officers Killed

Capt. Robt. Finnis Queen Charlotte

Jno. Garland
1st Lieut. — Detroit

Jas. Garden
Lieut. Royl. Newfdland. Regt.

Names of Officers Wounded

Capt. R. H. Barclay, Detroit, dangerously
J. M. Hoffmeister, Purser do. — do. —
Jas. Stokkoe, 1st Lieut., Q. Charlotte, severely
Jas. Foster, Midshipman, do., slightly
Lt. Edwd. Buchan,
Commanding Lady Prevost, dangerously
F. Rolette — 1st Lieut., Do., severely
Lieut. Geo. Bignell,
Commandr. — the Hunter, severely
Henry Gateshill,
Masters Mate, do. — slightly
Jno. Campbell,
Masters Mate,
Commandg. the Chippeway — slightly.

R. H. Barclay, *Commander and late Senior Officer.*

VII

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Secretary of the Navy William Jones

From American State Papers, *Naval Affairs*, volume i, 295-297. The original of this letter is not in the United States Navy Department Archives, Washington. The letter has been frequently published (see, for instance, *Niles' Register*, volume v, 61-62; James's *Naval Occurrences*, appendix, pages xc-xcii; and H. B. Dawson's *Battles of the United States*, volume ii, 287-288).

7. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES

U.S. SCHOONER ARIEL,[34] Put-in-Bay
September 13th, 1813

SIR: In my last[35] I informed you that we had captured the enemy's fleet on this lake. I have now the honor to give you the most important particulars of the action.

On the morning of the 10th instant, at sunrise, they were discovered from Put-in-Bay, where I lay at anchor with the squadron under my command. We got under way, the wind light at S.W., and stood for them. At ten a.m. the wind hauled to S.E. and brought us to windward; formed the line, and bore up. At fifteen minutes before twelve, the enemy commenced firing; at five minutes before twelve, the action commenced on our part. Finding their fire very destructive, owing to their long guns, and its being mostly directed at the Lawrence, I made sail, and directed the other vessels to

[34] Perry transferred his flag to the Ariel, on the morning of September 11. Both squadrons remained at anchor near the place of battle until about nine a.m. of that day, when they sailed for Put-in-Bay, where they arrived about noon (W. W. Dobbins's *History of the Battle of Lake Erie*, 60).

[35] See Document 2.

follow, for the purpose of closing with the enemy. Every brace and bowline being soon shot away, she became unmanageable, notwithstanding the great exertions of the sailing master. In this situation, she sustained the action upwards of two hours, within canister distance, until every gun was rendered useless, and the greater part of her crew either killed or wounded. Finding she could no longer annoy the enemy, I left her in charge of Lieutenant Yarnall,[36] who, I was convinced, from the bravery already displayed by him, would do what would comport with the honor of the flag. At half past two, the wind springing up, Captain Elliott was enabled to bring his vessel, the Niagara, gallantly into close action. I immediately went on board of her, when he anticipated my wishes, by volunteering to bring the schooners, which had been kept astern by the lightness of the wind, into closer action. It was with unspeakable pain that I saw, soon after I got on board the Niagara, the flag of the Lawrence come down; although I was perfectly sensible that she had been defended to the last, and that, to have continued to make a show of resistance would have been a wanton sac-

[36] The names and titles of the officers mentioned by Perry in this letter are as follows: Lieutenant John J. Yarnall, Master-commandant Jesse Duncan Elliott, Acting Lieutenant Dulaney Forrest, Sailing-master William V. Taylor, Lieutenant (of marines) John Brooks, Midshipman Henry Laub, Midshipman John Clark, Purser Samuel Hambleton, Midshipman Thomas Claxton, Midshipman Augustus Swartout, Lieutenant Joseph E. Smith, Lieutenant John J. Edwards, Midshipman Nelson Webster, Captain Henry B. Brevoort (of the army), Lieutenant Daniel Turner, Lieutenant John Packet, Sailing-master Stephen Champlin, and Purser Humphrey Magrath.

rifice of the remains of her brave crew. But the enemy was not able to take possession of her, and circumstances soon permitted her flag again to be hoisted. At forty-five minutes past two the signal was made for "closer action." The Niagara being very little injured, I determined to pass through the enemy's line; bore up, and passed ahead of their two ships and a brig, giving a raking fire to them, from the starboard guns, and to a large schooner and sloop from the larboard side, at half pistol shot distance. The smaller vessels, at this time, having got within grape and canister distance, under the direction of Captain Elliott, and keeping up a well directed fire, the two ships, a brig, and schooner, surrendered, a schooner and sloop making a vain attempt to escape.

Those officers and men who were immediately under my observation, evinced the greatest gallantry; and I have no doubt that all others conducted themselves as became American officers and seamen.

Lieutenant Yarnell, first of the Lawrence, although several times wounded, refused to quit the deck.

Midshipman Forrest (doing duty as lieutenant) and Sailing Master Taylor, were of great assistance to me.

I have great pain in stating to you the death of Lieutenant Brooks of the marines, and Midshipman Laub, both of the Lawrence, and Midshipman John Clark, of the Scorpion; they were valuable and promising officers.

Mr. Hambleton, purser, who volunteered his services on deck, was severely wounded, late in the action; Midshipmen Claxton and Swartwout, of the Lawrence, were severely wounded.

On board the Niagara, Lieutenants Smith and Edwards, and Midshipman Webster, (doing duty as sailing master) behaved in a very handsome manner.

Captain Brevoort, of the army, who acted as a volunteer, in the capacity of a marine officer, on board that vessel, is an excellent and brave officer, and with his musketry did great execution.

Lieutenant Turner, commanding the Caledonia, brought that vessel into action in the most able manner, and is an officer that, in all situations, may be relied on.

The Ariel, Lieutenant Packet, and Scorpion, Sailing Master Champlin, were enabled to get early into action, and were of great service.

Captain Elliott speaks in the highest terms of Mr. Magrath, purser, who had been despatched in a boat on service, previous to my getting on board the Niagara; and being a seaman, since the action has rendered essential service in taking charge of one of the prizes.

Of Captain Elliott, already so well known to the government, it would almost be superfluous to speak. In this action he evinced his characteristic bravery and judgment; and, since the close of the action, has given me the most able and essential assistance.

I have the honor to enclose you a return of the killed and wounded, together with a statement of the relative force of the squadrons. The captain and first lieutenant of the Queen Charlotte, and first lieutenant to the Detroit, were killed; Captain Barclay, senior officer, and the commander of the Lady Prevost, severely wounded. The commanders of the Hunter and Chippeway, slightly wounded.

Their loss in killed and wounded[37] I have not yet been able to ascertain; it must, however, have been very great.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

O. H. PERRY

[37] See Document 6, enclosure 2.

[ENCLOSURE [38]] LIST OF KILLED AND WOUNDED ON BOARD THE UNITED STATES' SQUADRON, UNDER COMMAND OF O. H. PERRY, ESQ. IN THE ACTION OF 10TH SEPTEMBER, 1813, VIZ:

On board the Lawrence, killed

John Brooks, lieutenant marines
Henry Laub, midshipman
Christopher Mayhew, quarter master
James W. Allen, seaman
John C. Kelly, private in the regiment
Nelson Peters, seaman
James Jones, ditto
John Rose, ditto
James Carty, sailmaker's mate
Thomas Butler, seaman
Wilson Mays, carpenter's mate
Joseph Kennedy, ditto
Charles Pohig, seaman
John Smith, seaman
William Cranston, ordinary seaman
Andrew Michael, seaman
John Hoffman, ordinary seaman
James Brown, seaman
Ethelred Sykes, landsman
Philip Sharbley, corporal of marines
Jesse Harland, private
Abner Williams, ditto

On board the Lawrence, wounded

John J. Yarnall, 1st lieutenant, slightly
Dulaney Forrest, 2d ditto, slightly
William V. Taylor, sailing master, slightly
Samuel Hambleton, purser, severely
William Dawson, seaman, severely
Westerly Johnson, ordinary seaman, severely
Samuel Spywood, ditto, severely
Robert Hill, seaman, slightly
Francis Cummings, ordinary seaman, severely

[38] These lists, it would seem, were enclosed with the letter.

Thomas Claxton, midshipman, severely
Augustus Swartwout, midshipman, severely
Jonas Stone, carpenter, slightly
William C. Keen, master at arms, slightly
Francis Mason, quarter master, severely
John Newen, ditto, severely
Joseph Lewis, ditto, severely
Ezekiel Fowler, ditto, slightly
Henry Schroeder, ordinary seaman, severely
Benoni Price, seaman, severely
Thomas Robinson, ditto, severely
Peter Kinsley, ditto, severely
Nathan Chapman, ditto, severely
Thomas Hill, ordinary seaman, severely
Barney M'Cain, ditto, severely
William Thompson, seaman, severely
George Varnum, ditto, severely
James Moses, ditto, severely
William Roe, ditto, severely
Joseph Denning, ditto, severely
William Daring, ditto, severely
John Clay, ditto, severely
Stephen Fairfield, ditto, severely
George Williams, ditto, severely
Lannon Huse, ditto, severely
James Waddington, ditto, severely
John E. Brown, quarter gunner, severely
William Johnson, boatswain's mate, severely
James Helan, ditto, slightly
George Cornell, carpenter's mate, slightly
Thomas Hammond, armorer, slightly
John Burnham, ditto, severely
John Burdeen, ditto, severely
Andrew Mattison, ditto, severely
Jeremiah Easterbrook, ordinary seaman, severely
Thomas Reed, ditto, severely
Charles Vandyke, ordinary seaman, severely
William Simpson, ditto, severely
Jesse Williams, ditto, slightly
James Hadley, ditto, slightly
James Bird, marine, severely
William Burnett, ditto, severely
William Baggs, ditto, severely
David Christie, ditto, severely
Henry Vanpoole, ditto, severely
Thomas Tuff, landsman, severely
Elijah Barlin, ditto, severely
John Adams, ditto, slightly
Charles Harrington, ditto, slightly
William B. Perkins, ditto, slightly
Nathaniel Wade, boy, severely
Newport Hazard, ditto, slightly

On the morning of the action, the sick list of the Lawrence contained thirty-one unfit for duty.

On board the Niagara, killed

Peter Morell, seaman
Isaac Hardy, ordinary seaman

On board the Niagara, wounded

John J. Edwards, lieutenant
John L. Cummings, midshipman
Edward Martin, seaman (since dead)
Charles Davidson, seaman
Daniel Bennet, ditto
John Felton, boatswain's mate
William Davis, ordinary seaman (since dead)
Joshua Trapnel, marine (since dead)
Ronvell Hall, ordinary seaman
George Platt, seaman
Elias Wiley, ordinary seaman
Henry Davidson, seaman
John M. Strebeck, ordinary seaman
John Freeman, ditto
James Sansford, seaman
Thomas Wilson, ditto
Sergeant Mason, marine
Corporal Scott, ditto
Thomas Miller, ditto
John Rumas, ditto
George McManomy, ditto
George Scoffield, ditto
Samuel Cochran, ditto

On the morning of the action, the sick list of the Niagara contained twenty-eight unfit for duty.

On board the Caledonia, wounded

James Artus, slightly
James Philips, slightly
Isaac Perkins, slightly

On board the Somers, wounded

Charles Ordun
Godfrey Bowman

On board the Ariel, killed

John White, boatswain's mate

Wounded

William Sloss, ordinary seaman, slightly
John Lucas, landsman, slightly
Robert Wilson, seaman, slightly

On board the Trippe, wounded

Isaac Green, soldier, 26th regiment, badly

John Nailes, soldier, 17th regiment, slightly

On board the Porcupine

None killed or wounded

On board the Scorpion, killed

John Clark, midshipman

John Sylhamamer, landsman

On board the Tigress

None killed or wounded.

Two days previous to the action, the sick lists of the small vessels contained the names of fifty-seven men unfit for service.

Recapitulation

	Killed	Wounded	Total
Lawrence,	22	61	83
Niagara,	2	25	27
Caledonia,	0	3	3
Somers,	0	2	2
Ariel,	1	3	4
Trippe	0	2	2
Porcupine,	0	0	0
Scorpion,	2	0	2
Tigress,	0	0	0
	27	96	123

S. HAMBLETON, *Purser.*

O. H. PERRY, *Captain and Senior Officer.*

[ENCLOSURE 2] STATEMENT OF THE FORCE OF THE BRITISH SQUADRON

Detroit, ship	19 guns, one on pivot, and two howitzers
Queen Charlotte, ship	17 do. do.
Lady Prevost, schooner	13 do. do.
Hunter, brig	10 do.
Little Belt, sloop	3 do.
Chippewa, schooner	1 do. and two swivels
	63 guns

Note—The Detroit is a new ship, very strongly built, and mounts long twenty-fours, eighteens, and twelves.

Statement of the Force of the United States Squadron

Lawrence, brig	20 guns.
Niagara, brig	20 do.
Caledonia, brig	3 do.
Ariel, schooner	4 do. (one burst early in action)
Scorpion, schooner	2 do.
Somers, schooner	2 do.
Trippe, sloop	1 do.
Tigress, schooner	1 do.
Porcupine, schooner	1 do.
	54 guns

The exact number of the enemy's force has not been ascertained, but I have good reason to believe that it exceeded ours by nearly one hundred men.

VIII

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Secretary of the Navy William Jones

From the United States Navy Department Archives, *Captains' Letters*, 1813, volume vi, number 41.

8. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES

U.S. SCHR. ARIEL, Put in Bay, 13th Septr., 1813.

Sir: I have caused the prisoners taken on the 10th inst. to be landed at Sandusky, and have requested Genl. Harrison to have them marched to Chilicothy,[39] and there wait until your pleasure shall be known respecting them.

The Lawrence has been so entirely cut up, it is absolutely necessary, she should go into a safe harbor. I have therefore directed Lt. Yarnall to proceed to Erie in her, with the wounded of the fleet, and dismantle and get her over the bar, as soon as possible. It will probably be impossible to repair her this season in time to be of any service. I have to ask your directions as respects the disposal of the prizes, the two ships in a heavy sea this day, at anchor lost their masts, being much injured in the action. I shall haul them into the inner bay, at this place, and moor them for the present. The four other prizes, I shall fit out for the expedition against Malden, and for transporting Genl. Har-

[39] Chillicothe, Ohio, then capital of the state, situated about one hundred miles east by north of Cincinnati.

rison's troops. The Detroit is a remarkably fine ship, sails well and is very strongly built. The Queen Charlotte is a much superior vessel to what has been represented. The Lady Prevost, is a large fine schooner.

I also beg your instructions respecting the wounded. I am satisfied, Sir, that whatever steps, I might take governed by humanity, would meet your approbation, under this impression, I have taken upon myself to promise Capt. Barclay who is very dangerously wounded that he shall be landed as near Lake Ontario as possible, and I had no doubt you would allow me to parole[40] him, he is under the impression that nothing but leaving this part of the country, will save his life. There is also a number of Canadians among the prisoners, many who have families.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

very respectfully your obd. serv.

O. H. PERRY

[40] See Documents 14 and 16.

IX

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Major-General William Henry Harrison

From *Niles' Register*, volume v, 263.

9. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

U.S. SCHR. ARIEL, Sept. 15, 1813

Sir: The very great assistance, in the action of the 10th inst. derived from those men you were pleased to send on board the squadron, render it a duty to return you my sincere thanks for so timely a reinforcement.[41] In fact, sir, I may say, without those men the victory could not have been achieved; and equally to assure you, that those officers and men behaved as became good soldiers and seamen. Those who were under my immediate observation, evinced great ardor and bravery. Captain Brevort,[42] of the second regiment of infantry, serving on board the Niagara, I beg leave to recommend particularly to your notice: he is a brave and gallant officer, and as far as I am capable of judging an excellent one. I am convinced you will present the merit of this officer to the view of the honorable secretary of war, as I shall to the honorable secretary of the navy.

Very respectfully, I am, sir, your obedient servant, OLIVER H. PERRY

[41] The names of the officers and men serving with Perry will be found in the American State Papers, *Naval Affairs*, vol. i, 566-572.

[42] Captain Henry B. Brevoort.

X

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Secretary of the Navy William Jones

From the United States Navy Department Archives, *Captains' Letters*, 1813, volume vi, number 65.

10. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES

U.S. SCHOOR. ARIEL, Put in Bay, Sepr. 17th, 1813

Sir: I send by Mr. Forrest[43] the flags taken in the action of the 10th inst. on Lake Erie.

I have the honor to be, sir, your Obd. Servt.

O. H. PERRY

[43] Acting Lieutenant Dulaney Forrest. See page 45.

XI

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Secretary of the Navy William Jones

From the United States Navy Department Archives, *Captains' Letters*, 1813, volume vi, number 66.

11. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES

U.S. SCHOONER ARIEL, At anchor off Portage River[44] 18th Septr., 1813

Sir: Among the officers taken are a number who have large family's in Canada.[45] I have directed that they be left near the lake, until your orders may be had respecting them. They are extremely anxious to return home.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to be, sir, your obd. sert. O. H. PERRY

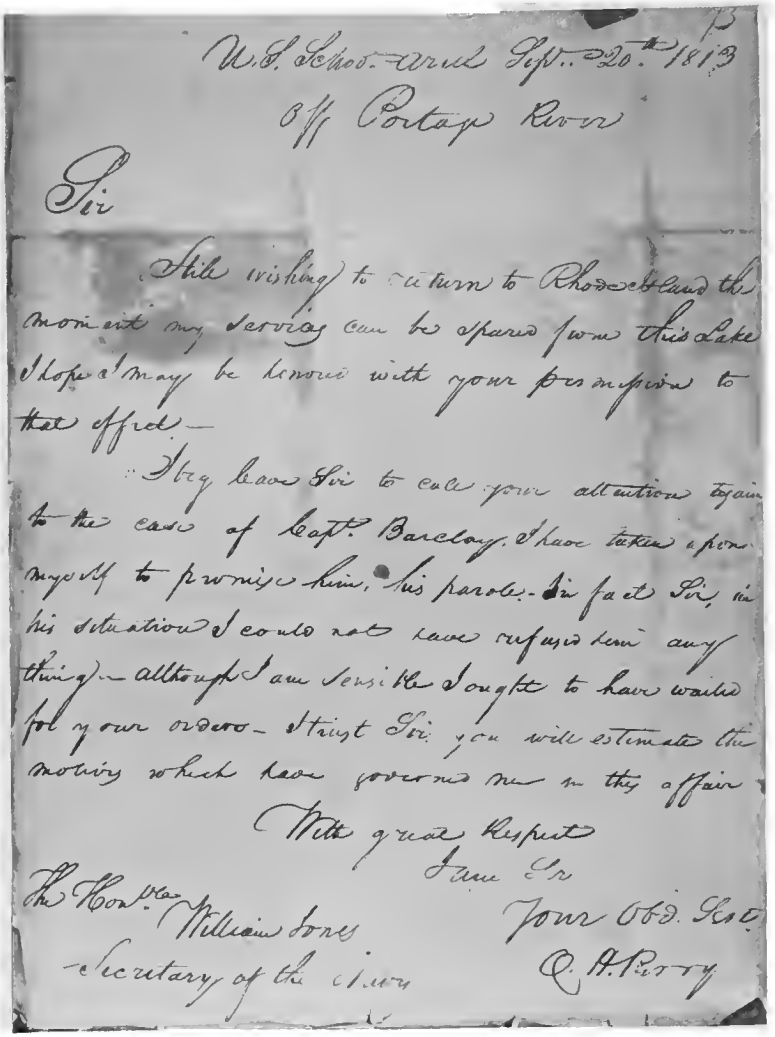
[44] The Portage River empties into Lake Erie a few miles to the westward of Sandusky Bay.

[45] For officers of the Canadian provincial marine, see L. Homfray Irving's *Officers of the British Forces in Canada*, 202-207.

XII

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Secretary of the Navy William Jones

From the United States Navy Department Archives, *Captains' Letters*, 1813, volume vi, number 73.



U.S. Schoo. Ariel Sept. 20th 1813
off Portage River

Sir

Still wishing to return to Rhode Island the moment my services can be spared from this Lake I hope I may be honored with your permission to that effect.—

I beg leave Sir to call your attention again to the case of Capt. Barclay. I have taken upon myself to promise him, his parole. In fact Sir, in his situation I could not have refused him any thing.— although I am sensible I ought to have waited for your orders. I trust Sir you will estimate the motives which have governed me in this affair

With great Respect
I am Sir
Your Obd. Sert.
O. H. Perry

The Honble. William Jones
Secretary of the Navy

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE LETTER OF COMMODORE PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES, SEPTEMBER 20, 1813

From the original manuscript in the United States Navy Department Archives, Washington, D.C.

12. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES

U. S. SCHOOR. ARIEL, Sepr. 20th, 1813
off Portage River

Sir: Still wishing to return to Rhode Island the moment my services can be spared from this lake I hope I may be honored with your permission to that effect.[46]

I beg leave, Sir, to call your attention again to the case of Capt. Barclay. I have taken upon myself to promise him, his parole. In fact, Sir, in his situation I could not have refused him any thing—although I am sensible I ought to have waited for your orders—I trust, Sir, you will estimate the motives which have governed me in this affair.[47]

With great respect, I am, Sir, your obd. sert.

O. H. PERRY

[46] See Documents 16 and 17.

[47] See Documents 8, 14, and 16.

XIII

Letter of Secretary of the Navy William Jones to Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry

From the United States Navy Department Archives, *Letters to Officers of Ships of War*, volume xi, 93.

13. SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES TO COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY

Naval Department [Washington, D. C.]
Septr. 21st, 1813

Sir: Rumour[48] had preceded and prepared the public mind for the enthusiastic reception of the glorious tidings, confirmed by your letter of the 10th received and published in handbills this day.

Every demonstration of joy and admiration, that a victory so transcendently brilliant, decisive, and important in its consequences, could excite, was exhibited as far and as fast as the roar of cannon and the splendour of illumination could travel.

In the absence of the President I have no hesitation in anticipating his warmest admiration and thanks, in behalf of our country, for this splendid achievement, which must ever continue among the brightest honours of the nation. You will please accept, for yourself, an ample share, and communicate to the gallant officers, seamen, and others, under your command, the full measure of those sentiments and feelings, which it is my duty to express, and my delight to cherish.

[48] The first news of the battle reached Washington on September 18.

Tomorrow, I trust, will bring the interesting details, for which so many hearts are palpitating between the laurel and the cypress.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. JONES

GLORIOUS NEWS.

HERALD—EXTRA.

CARLISLE, SEPTEMBER [illegible]

THE BRITISH FLEET ON LAKE ERIE TAKEN.

CHILICOTHE, Sept. 19.

By the arrival of the express mail on Monday evening we have received the important and gratifying intelligence of the capture of the whole British fleet on Lake Erie, by the U. S. squadron under the command of commodore PERRY. The particulars of the engagement have not yet been received; but it appears that the British had commenced their fleet with an extra proportion of men, in order to be prepared for boarding. On the receipt of the above information the town was illuminated and every demonstration of joy expressed. Previous to the engagement general Harrison had removed the army from Seneca to the margin of the lake preparatory to their embarkation which was completed immediately to take place.

U. S. Brig Niagara, off the Western Sister, head of Lake Erie, Sept. 10th, 1813, 4 P. M.

DEAR GENERAL,

We have met the enemy; and they are ours! Two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop.

Yours with great respect and esteem,

O. H. PERRY.

Maj. Gen. Harrison.

September 13th.

Dear Sir—We have a great number of prisoners, which I wish to land; Will you be so good as to order a guard to receive them; and inform me the place? Considerable numbers have been killed and wounded on both sides.—From the best information, we have more prisoners than we have men on board our vessels. In great haste, yours very truly.

O. H. PERRY.

Gen. Harrison.

Copy of a letter to the editor of the Greensburgh Gazette, by last night's Express Post, from Pittsburgh, Sunday, 9 o'clock, 19th September.

"A letter has just been received by the mail from Cleveland, dated "Lower Seneca, Sept. 13, which says "We have just received an express from commodore PERRY, stating his having taken

The whole British Fleet, more prisoners than he had men on board, and Two Brigadier Generals."

The letter further states—"We shall embark for Malden to-morrow."

FACSIMILE OF A BROADSIDE ANNOUNCING THE VICTORY

From the original in the collection of the New York Historical Society

XIV

Letter of Secretary of the Navy William Jones to Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry

From the United States Navy Department Archives, *Letters to Officers of Ships of War*, volume xi, 94-95.

14. SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES TO COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY

NAVY DEPARTMENT, [Washington, D. C.]
Septr. 22nd, 1813

Sir: Referring to my letter of yesterday, in answer to yours of the 10th, I have now to acknowledge the receipt, this instant, of your two letters of of the 13th inst.,[49] containing the details of the action, which terminated in the glorious victory of the 10th – which, though sanguinary and destructive, I am happy to find, has been less so, among our valuable officers, than I had apprehended.

The commissary general of prisoners,[50] who has the entire direction of that department, will immediately direct what is proper to be done in that respect, and I will venture to anticipate his approbation of your promise to admit Captain Barclay to his parole, and to extend, not only to him, but to the other wounded prisoners, all the humanity, which a generous enemy can bestow, and a benevolent people approve.

In respect to the disposition of the prizes, I can,

[49] See Documents 2, 7, 8, and 13.

[50] General John Mason. See *Niles' Register*, vol. v, 52-53.

at present, only observe, that you will employ such as may be in condition, in such way as the public service may require, on the contemplated military expedition; and place the remainder in safety, until future measures be adopted for their final disposition.

They will, of course, be regularly libelled and adjudicated, in some of one of the courts of the United States.

The two ships, I presume, are too heavy to be got over the Bar of Erie; and I know not, if the inner Bay of Sandusky affords shelter sufficient, until another more secure and convenient can be found. Should the success of our arms place Malden and Detroit River in our possession, this object would be obtained.

I hope the military expedition may not detain the whole of your force so long as to defeat the intention of sending a part into Lake Huron, should we be so fortunate as to command the passes.

Upon all these subjects, and in everything relating to your command, you will communicate with, and receive the instructions of Commodore Chauncey, communicating to this department direct (in order to save time), as well as to Commodore Chauncey, whatever may appear to you of sufficient importance to the government.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. JONES

XV

Letter of Dr. Usher Parsons to William Parsons

From the Rhode Island Historical Society *Publications*, new series, volume vii, 245-246. Parsons was a naval surgeon on board the flag-ship Lawrence. In 1852 he delivered a discourse before the Rhode Island Historical Society in which he made a complete statement of his recollections of the Battle of Lake Erie (Providence, 1853, 36 pages). The same views that he then expressed respecting Elliott he held a few days after the battle as may be seen from the letter here published.

15. DR. USHER PARSONS TO WILLIAM PARSONS

OFF LOWER SANDUSKY, near Put-In Bay, and near the head of Lake Erie on board Brig Lawrence
Sept. 22d, 1813

DEAR PARENTS: Before the arrival of this, an account of our victorious engagement with the British squadron on this lake will reach you. I can only add a few particulars. Most of the action was supported by this vessel as you will be led to suppose when informed that out of one hundred fifty men (our ships crew), thirty-one of whom were sick previous to the action we had rising eighty[51] killed and wounded, among whom were nearly all our officers save the intrepid commander. On board all the others were about thirty killed and wounded. This vessel supported a destructive fire from the enemy's two ships on one side and a brig astern raking us for two hours, all within musket shot, during which we so disabled the ships that when the commodore left this vessel to bring another into her assistance he succeeded in fifteen minutes in making all three strike. It may seem mysterious to one how some of the other vessels

[51] According to Perry's list, eighty-three (see Document 7).

could see us slaughtered in such a manner, but it is equally so to us. Nor can the commanders of some of them offer satisfactory reasons, for remaining behind. Unfortunately for the wounded, the two surgeons had been confined for some days with fever and could render them but little assistance. It, however, has operated in my favour, as I have had all the amputating to perform and it affords me the greatest pleasure to reflect that in no case have I failed of the best success, this has impressed the commodore with so favourable an opinion toward me that I have not the least doubt of his rendering me assistance to a better situation. He is the first warm friend I have met with in the service, capable of assisting me. I am now on my way in the Lawrence for Erie, having all the sick and wounded on board and shall continue with them in the hospital 'til the most of them recover, and then intend to shape my course for Cape Home. Gen. Harrison was on board the Lawrence this morning, and his army was on an island within half a mile of the vessel, consisting of about seven thousand. Tomorrow they cross to Malden [52] a distance of about eighteen miles. Since the loss of the British fleet the Indians have deserted Detroit after burning the place and (as is reported) massacreing the inhabitants. I had some narrow escapes for my life; during the action five cannon balls passed through the room in which I was attending to the wounded. Two

[52] The movement of the army that culminated in the Battle of the Thames on October 5, 1813.

that I had dressed and laid aside were afterwards killed during the action. The enemy's squadron mounted more guns than ours and carried at least one fourth more men. In the course of a year I hope to obtain a little prize money. I have enjoyed very bad health during this cruise and am reduced to a skeleton, and will never cross this or any other lake again.

I have lately received a letter from Dr. A. Hall Jr and one from Charlotte Parsons, dated August 28th.

Remember me to enquiring friends. Your affectionate son

USHER PARSONS

Saml. is steady and well.

XVI

Letter of Secretary of the Navy William Jones to Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry

From the United States Navy Department Archives, *Letters to Officers of Ships of War*, volume xi, 102-103.

16. SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES TO COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY

NAVY DEPARTMENT [Washington, D.C.]
Septr. 29th, 1813

SIR: The President has confirmed the sentiments, which I anticipated, in my letter to you of the 21st inst.[53] in a manner the most ample and expressive.

I have, by his direction, executed a commission[54] promoting you to the rank of a captain in the navy of the United States, which I will forward to whatever place you shall please to direct.

I am, this morning, favoured with yours of the 20th[55] and, although there is much of importance yet to be done upon the Upper Lakes, which I should like you to bring to maturity, yet, if you think the service will not suffer by your absence, you are at liberty, as soon as the public interest shall admit of your departure, to proceed to Rhode Island and resume your command there, until a ship, suitable to your rank, shall be at the disposal of the department.

[53] See Document 13.

[54] Perry's commission was dated September 10, 1813.

[55] See Document 12.

In the event of your resigning the command of the Erie squadron, it will, of course, devolve on Captain Elliott, who will communicate with, and receive the instructions of Commodore Chauncey,[56] the commander-in-chief, who will be furnished with a copy of this letter.

Capt. Elliott will communicate direct to this department (in order to save time), whatever may be of importance to be speedily known.

The commissary general of prisoners has given the necessary directions, in relation to those captured by you, and you will not parole any person, except Captain Barclay, without his special authority.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. JONES

[56] Commodore Isaac Chauncey, commander-in-chief of the American naval forces on the lakes.

XVII

Letter of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry to Secretary of the Navy William Jones

From the United States Navy Department Archives, *Captains' Letters*, 1813, volume vii, number 3.

17. COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY WILLIAM JONES

U.S. SCHOONER ARIEL, Detroit, 16th October, 1813

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your several letters of the 21st and 22nd ult.[57] I beg you, Sir, to accept my thanks for the very flattering manner you are pleased to speak of the conduct of the officers and men belonging to the squadron under my command, in the action of the 10th September. To possess the good opinion of the government is what we are all ambitious of, and I hope, and trust, the future exertions of all will be such as to merit, a continuance of that favor which has been so liberally bestowed in this instance.

I should feel a delicacy in accepting the post captain's[58] commission, which it has pleased the President to order to be sent me, if I did not consider the precedent long since established, by the appointment of Capt. Decatur over the heads of others.[59] Should I be wrong in this opinion, I re-

[57] See Documents 13 and 14.

[58] A term used interchangeably with "captain."

[59] A reference to the promotion of Decatur, in 1804, over several officers senior to him in rank, as a reward for the destruction of the Philadelphia, in the harbor of Tripoli.

quest, Sir, that the commission may be kept back until my right shall entitle me to that honor without passing over Capt. Leonard.[60]

As long, Sir, as I can be of service here, I shall remain, with pleasure.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to be, Sir,

your obd. sert.

O. H. PERRY

[60] Master-commandant James T. Leonard stood next above Perry at the head of the list of masters-commandant. In promoting Perry to be captain it was necessary to pass over Leonard.

XVIII

Court-Martial of Commander Robert Heriot Barclay, September, 1814

From a manuscript copy in the United States Navy Department Library, Washington. This was obtained for Rear-admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, U.S.N., in 1903 or 1904.

18. COURT-MARTIAL OF COMMANDER ROBERT HERIOT BARCLAY, SEPTEMBER, 1814

At a Court Martial assembled on board His Majesty's ship Gladiator in Portsmouth Harbour on the ninth day of September, 1814, Present:

Edward James Foote, Esquire, rear admiral of the White and second officer in the command of His Majesty's ships and vessels at Spithead and in Portsmouth Harbour – President

Captain Benjamin Willm. Page	Captain Sir James Athol Wood, Knt.
George Fowke	David Lloyd
Adam Drummond	Edward Brace
Zachariah Mudge	Richard Byron [62]
Arthur Farquhar	John Quilliam
James Richard Dacres [61]	George Francis Seymour

Pursuant to an order from the Right Honorable Lords Commiss[ioners] of the Admiralty dated the eighth day of September, 1814, and directed to the President setting forth that Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo,[63] had transmitted to their Lord-

[61] Dacres was commander of the British frigate "Guerrière" when she was captured by the United States frigate "Constitution" in August, 1812.

[62] Byron was commander of the British frigate "Belvidera," when she made her escape from the squadron of Commodore John Rodgers in June, 1812.

[63] Commander-in-chief of the British naval forces on the lakes.

ships the copy of a letter which he had received from Robert Heriot Barclay, Esquire, commander of His Majesty's late ship Detroit and senior officer commanding a squadron of His Majesty's ships and vessels in Lake Erie dated the 12th of September, 1813, detailing the particular circumstances of the capture of the said squadron on Lake Erie by a squadron of ships and vessels of the United States of America on the 10th of the same month. The court proceeded to enquire into the cause and circumstances of the capture of His Majesty's late squadron and to try the said Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, his surviving officers and seamen late belonging thereto, for their conduct on that occasion, and having heard the evidence produced and completed the enquiry, and having maturely and deliberately weighed and considered the whole, the court is of opinion that the capture of His Majesty's late squadron was caused by the very defective means Captain Barclay possessed to equip them on Lake Erie, the want of a sufficient number of able seamen whom he had repeatedly and earnestly requested to be sent to him, the very great superiority of the force of the enemy to the British squadron and the unfortunate early fall of the superior officers in the action. That it appears that the greatest exertions had been made by Captain Barclay in equipping and getting into order, the vessels under his command. That he was fully justified under the existing circumstances in bringing the enemy to action. That the judgment and gallantry of Captain Barclay in taking his squadron into action

and during the contest were highly conspicuous and entitled him to the highest praise and that the whole of the other officers and men of His Majesty's late squadron conducted themselves in the most gallant manner and doth adjudge the said Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, his surviving officers and men to be most fully and most honourably acquitted and they are hereby most fully and most honourably acquitted accordingly.

EDWD. JAS. FOOTE	J. A. WOOD
B. W. PAGE	DAVID LLOYD
GEORGE FOWKE	E. BRACE
ADAM DRUMMOND	R. BYRON
ZACHARY MUDGE	J. QUILLIAM
ARTHR. FARQUHAR	G. F. SEYMOUR

JAS. R. DACRES

MR. GREETHAM, *Dy. Judge Advocate of the Fleet.*

Minutes taken at a Court Martial assembled on board His Majesty's ship Gladiator in Portsmouth Harbour on the ninth day of September, 1814. Present:

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George Fowke	Edward Brace
Adam Drummond	Richd. Byron
Zachariah Mudge	John Quilliam
Arthur Farquhar	Geoe. Fras. Seymour
Jas. Richd. Dacres	
David Lloyd	

Captain Robert Heriot Barclay,[64] commander of His Majesty's late ship, Detroit, his surviving officers and seamen, were brought in and audience admitted.

The order from the Right Honorable Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, dated the eighth day of September, 1814 and directed to the President, setting forth, that Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo had transmitted to their Lordships the copy of a letter which he had received from Robert Heriot Barclay, Esquire, commander of His Majesty's late ship, Detroit, and senior officer commanding a squadron of His Majesty's ships and vessel [*sic*] on Lake Erie, dated the 12th of September, 1813, detailing the particular circumstances of the capture of the said squadron on Lake Erie by a squadron of ships and vessels of the United States of America on the 10th of the same month, and to enquire into the cause and circumstances of the capture of His Majesty's late squadron, and to try the said Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, his surviving officers and seamen late belonging thereto, for their conduct on that occasion, was read.

[64] Barclay's appearance at his trial has been thus described by an eye witness: "It was not possible to see this brave officer before the court, and not be agitated with mingled feelings of regret and admiration, with one arm amputated, the other so dangerously wounded as to be suspended in bandages in a most particular position; a part of his thigh cut away by a cannon shot; and, with five other wounds, he presented, while the sentence was passing, an honourable instance of suffering heroism, and mental sensibility for he was affected at the testimony borne by the court to his conduct, almost to the shedding of tears."—*Naval Chronicle*, vol. xxxii, 243.

The President reported to the court, that Captains Peter Heywood and James Black[65] were absent on Admiralty leave.

The members of the court, and the judge advocate then in open court, and before they proceeded to trial respectively took the several oaths enjoined and directed in and by an Act of Parliament made and passed in the twenty-second year of the reign of His late Majesty, King George the second, entitled, "An Act for amending, explaining, and reducing into one Act of Parliament the Laws relating to the Government of His Majesty's Ships, Vessels, and Forces by Sea."

Then the said letter from the said Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo and the copy of the letter from the said Captain Robert Heriot Barclay were read, and are hereto annexed.[66]

To Captain Barclay:

Q. Have you any further narrative to produce of the transactions respecting the loss of His Majesty's squadron on Lake Erie?

Captain Barclay produced a narative[67] [*sic*], which was read, and is hereto annexed.

Captain Barclay being sworn, declared that the contents of the narrative that had been read to the court were correct and true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Q. Have you any complaint to make against

[65] Members of the court who did not attend its sittings.

[66] For the letter of Yeo, see *Niles' Register*, vol. vi, 181; for the letter of Barclay, see Document 6.

[67] See the latter part of this document, pages 152-165.

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[65] Members of the court who did not attend its sittings.

[66] For the letter of Yeo, see *Niles' Register*, vol. vi, 181; for the letter of Barclay, see Document 6.

[67] See the latter part of this document, pages 152-165.

any of the officers or crews of the squadron lately under your command on Lake Erie?

A. None.

To the Officers:

Q. Have either of you any complaint to make against Captain Barclay respecting his conduct on the occasion?

A. None whatever.

Lieutenant Thomas Stokoe sworn.

Q. Are the contents of the narrative of Captain Barclay more particularly as to the scarcity of provisions at Lake Erie and the want of seamen on board the squadron correct and true as far as came within your knowledge and to the best of your belief?

A. They are, we were particularly short of seamen.

Q. How many men had you on board the Queen Charlotte that you could call experienced seamen?

A. Not more than ten with the petty officer. We had on board between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and thirty men, officers, and all together.

Q. How many men had you on board that had been accustomed to work the great guns with a ship in motion?

A. Only the men that came up from the Dover[68] three days before we sailed, we had sixteen of

[68] His Majesty's troop-ship at Quebec.

them, boys included, from the Dover, the rest we learnt ourselves since our arrival on the Lake.

Q. Do you know whether the other vessels that composed the squadron of Captain Barclay were equally deficient in seamen?

A. All the other vessels were equally deficient in point of seamen, except the Detroit might have had a few more on account of being a larger vessel.

Q. Were you a prisoner on board the American vessels?

A. No, I remained on board our own vessel six weeks after we were captured, I never was on board any of the enemy's vessels.

Q. How many of those seamen of the British squadron were killed and wounded?

A. One killed and four wounded of the able seamen on board the Queen Charlotte.

Q. At half an allowance how many days provisions had you on board the Queen Charlotte when you went out?

A. We might have had a weeks at half allowance of provisions, but not of spirits. They were preserved for the action, and all consumed on that day, we had none served out for several days before.

Q. Can you recollect the state of the Queen Charlotte just before you were wounded?

A. Several shots had struck the vessel many of the ropes were cut away, but the vessel was then manageable, this was about an hour and a quarter

after the commencement of the action. Captain Finnis[69] and Lieutenant Garden of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment were killed immediately on the commencement of the action, before a man was hurt. There were then one provincial lieutenant, one masters mate that had been in the navy, and two provincial midshipmen, quite youngsters, and two warrant officers, a boatswain and gunner left, this was after I was wounded.

Q. At what distance did the Niagara engage the Queen Charlotte in the beginning of the action?

A. She engaged us on the quarter out of carronade distance, with what long guns she had.

Q. Was your principal injury received from her?

A. No, from the Caledonia, who laid on our beam with two long twenty-four pounders on pivets, also out of carronade shot distance.

Captain Barclay asked:

Q. Had provincial Lieutenant Irvine experience sufficient to such service, as to conduct the Queen Charlotte in action after the death of Captain Finnis, and your own wound?

A. He was a very brave young man, a perfect seaman, but not experienced as an officer.

Provincial Lieutenant Francis Purvis, late of His Majesty's ship Detroit, called in and sworn.

Q. Are the contents of the narrative of Captain Barclay more particularly as to the scarcity of provisions at Lake Erie and the want of seamen on

[69] For the full names of the officers here mentioned, see Document 6.

board the squadron correct and true as far as came within your knowledge and to the best of your belief?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. How many experienced seamen had you on board the Detroit when the action commenced?

A. To the best of my knowledge not more than ten, petty officers included.

Q. How long had the Detroit been in action when Captain Barclay unfortunately received his wound?

A. About two hours and a half to the best of my recollection.

Q. Was every exertion made to defend the ship after Captain Barclay was wounded?

A. Yes.

Q. Was she at that time in a very disabled and unmanageable state?

A. Very much so indeed.

Q. Can you recollect how many of those ten seamen were killed and wounded?

A. To the best of my recollection seven or eight were killed or wounded.

Q. How near were the enemy to you during the early part of the engagement?

A. I should suppose in the early part of the engagement the Detroit in engaging the Lawrence was within a musquet shot and within pistol shot of the Niagara, the latter came down after the Lawrence had struck.

Q. Did you observe any of the shots of the en-

emy's ship to reach the British squadron when the latters guns did not reach them?

A. I cannot say exactly that I did, being employed at my gun.

Q. Why did you not take possession of the Lawrence when she struck?

A. We had only one boat and that was cut to pieces and the Niagara, another large brig, being to windward, came down too quickly upon us.

Q. What do you atribute the loss of the action principally to?

A. To the loss of Captain Finnis and the Queen's running up under our lee and the Detroits falling on board of them which permitted the enemy's squadron to lay and rake us and the men consequently got into confusion.

Q. Did the enemy's gun boats do you much damage?

A. More than any of their vessels, they had long two and thirties.

Q. Did you understand that the enemys vessels were well manned?

A. Yes, they were remarkably well manned,[70] I believe from the information I received from the American officers that the Lawrence had more able seamen on board than we had in our whole squadron, I was on board the Lawrence about a quarter of an hour and on board the Niagara two or three

[70] An exaggeration. The British officers were naturally disposed to make out as good a case as possible for their commander.

days, she appeared to be very well manned. They chiefly manned the prizes from her.

Q. Was the Queen Charlotte in a manageable state immediately before she got on board the Detroit?

A. She did not appear so, they did not back any of their sails to avoid her.

Q. What was the force of the American brig?

A. The Lawrence and Niagara had each eighteen thirty-two pound carronades, and two long twelves. The Caledonia two long twenty-four and one thirty-two or twenty-four pound carronades, the Tigress one long thirty-two. I was not on board the Ariel, Summers, Porcupine, Scorpion or Trip, but I understood they had all long thirty-two pound and one or two had carronades, I believe.

Q. Did they appear to be manned equal to the larger brigs?

A. Yes they did in equal Proportions.

	lb.	
The Detroit had	2-24 1-18 6-12 8- 9	long guns
	1-24	carronade
	1-18	do.
The Queen Charlotte	3-12	long guns
	14-24	carronade
The Lady Prevost	3- 9	long guns
	10-12	carronade